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INDIANA COVERLETS AND COVERLET WEAVERS

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INDIANA COVERLETS AND COVERLET WEAVERS

THE PROCESSES OF COVERLET WEAVING

Until a few years ago, very little was known of the handcrafts of our early Indiana pioneers. While many specimens of their work have survived, little interest has been shown in them, and many specimens of beautiful weaving of the pioneer mothers have been relegated to the attic or have been degraded to the most humble household use. Not until the celebration in 1916 of Indiana's centennial of statehood, were attics ransacked and old chests opened to reveal the wealth of handcraft, the work of our pioneer men and women, which still remains in the state. Most beautiful of all these specimens were the coverlets, double and single, whose intricate patterns and rich coloring set off the centennial displays of pioneer furniture. A year or so before, a book on the subject of hand-woven coverlets had been published in the east, and a study of its plates revealed the fact that examples fully as beautiful were to be found in many Indiana homes, some of them brought from other states as part of a pioneer girl's dowry; many of them the work of Indiana weavers. Then it was deeply regretted that these pieces of pioneer weaving had been so hardly used, sometimes as covering for ironing boards, or, in the country, as horse blankets, or to spread over vegetables or tobacco. The interest aroused at this time by the study of the patterns has resulted in the accumulation of a considerable amount of information concerning these covers and the men and women who made them. This information, while as yet incomplete, is collected in this pamphlet in the hope that it may result in arousing still further interest in hand-woven coverlets

and stimulate research in the history of coverlet weaving in this state.

Until recently so little has been known about coverlets that the name itself is often misapplied, so that the coverlet is sometimes called a spread, sometimes a counterpane, and sometimes a quilt. A newspaper picture some months ago showed a group of Berea College students presenting a coverlet to Mrs. Coolidge, but the caption read that the "quilt" which they presented her was "spun, dyed, and woven" by students of the college. The mistake is not surprising, since the words are used interchangeably in the dictionary. As the terms were used in this country in the days when these articles were all made by hand, the spread and the counterpane were bed coverings woven of cotton or linen, and the quilt was pieced of scraps of cotton materials, laid over a piece of muslin with a layer of cotton between, and quilted by hand in intricate patterns. The coverlet was woven on a loom from materials prepared by the housewife, usually linen or cotton for the warp, and wool for the woof. The word "coverlid" is a mispronunciation of "coverlet" which means, presumably, a little cover. It is said that the mountaineers of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky, among whom this ancient art has been preserved, gave the word this mispronunciation, and sometimes they shorten it to "kiver." There is no reason why we should perpetuate the mispronunciation "coverlid" any more than we should say "kiver."

The art of coverlet weaving was brought to America in the seventeenth century from the Netherlands, France, the British Isles, Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden. It is said that a coverlet weaver came over with the Pilgrim Fathers, and that French Huguenots carried the art to the south. From the time of the earliest settlements until long after the Revolution, coverlet weavers came to America from these countries, particularly from Scotland, and followed the stream of emigration across the Alleghenies.

In order to understand the history of coverlet weaving in

the United States, one must first learn the method of its manufacture. There are two kinds of coverlets, known as the "single" and the "double." The "single" coverlet was woven by the housewife on the hand loom on which she also wove sheets, blankets, and linsey-woolsey. This hand loom was as much a part of the household outfit in colonial times and later in pioneer days of the middle west, as were the "big" wheel, the "little" or flax wheel, the reel, and other implements required for the manufacture of cloth. The "double" coverlet was made on a different kind of loom, much more complicated, and therefore always made by a so-called professional weaver. Sometimes this man set up what he often called his "factory" in a town or in the country on his farm; sometimes he was an itinerant weaver, though we have no record of itinerants in this state. His covers are called "double" because in certain parts of the design the fabric can be taken between the fingers and pulled apart, as though it were two coverlets, joined in places by the pattern. The late Arthur Osborn, of Spiceland, Indiana, is authority for the statement that this was sometimes called "division weaving."

In the case of both "double" and "single" coverlets, preparation of the material was the same. A brief account of this preparation and the labor involved should inspire a greater respect for the makers of these coverlets. For both varieties of coverlets the loom was strung with either flax or cotton thread. The flax thread was used in the earlier days, before cotton was procurable. The following description of the preparation of the flax for household use was prepared by the late Rufus Dooley, of Rockville, Indiana, who states:

There are not many people now living who remember the intricate details and many complex variations of the flax industry of the early times. Some seventy or seventy-five years ago it was no small part of the economic life of the people who built their homes and lived their lives in the woods. The larger part of the wearing apparel for men and boys was made of home-made flax cloth. Bed sheets and grain sacks, towels, and many other household articles were made of the same material. The grain sacks held three bushels of wheat, and the boy who could not shoulder three bushels of wheat had not yet arrived at man's estate.

The various divisions of the industry were conducted by both men and women; there were many processes, and a small piece of special machinery was required for each process. The seed was sown in the early spring in the usual broadcast way, on about half an acre of ground, and was harvested by pulling it up by the roots, following the hay harvest. It was then bound in bundles as wheat was bound, up to the time of the invention of the self-binder. After it had dried, it was opened and spread out on a clean, level meadow, in nice straight rows, and allowed to remain there for two weeks or more, subject to the rain, the dew, the wind and the sunshine, until the woody part of the stalk had decayed and become brittle, and could easily be separated from the fiber by the succeeding processes of breaking, scutching, and hackling. After rotting, it was stored in the barn until thoroughly dry, and during the cold dry days of the later winter, the process of manufacture began in earnest.

First, the "brake," the indescribable flax brake, operated by a man with muscle; this broke the woody part of the stalk into small bits, and made it ready for the next process, the scutching board. This, too, was usually a man's job, but from that on, through the first, or coarse hackle, the second or finer hackle, and the third or finest hackle, the work became woman's prerogative.

This third hackle left the flax in a perfect condition, ready for spinning, which was done on a small spinning wheel, operated by foot power. The material to be spun was held in place by a "rock" attached to the little spinning wheel; it was usually of home construction made from the limb of a tree with four prongs brought together at the top and tied with a string in the form of a cone. From the "spindle" the material was wound off onto the "reel," and from there to the "winding blades," back to the little wheel again, where it was run on "quills" to fit the weaver's shuttle. The loom was a very practical piece of old time machinery, not a nail in it, held together with mortices, tenons, and wooden keys. It could easily be taken down when necessary and put away in a small place. On such looms as this were woven the beautiful coverlets so much admired to-day.

Later, when cotton was available, cotton thread was used instead of the linen. The preparation of the wool was fully as elaborate as that of the flax, for it involved shearing, washing, picking, carding, spinning, and dyeing, all in preparation for the weaving. Mrs. J. J. Netterville, of Anderson, and the late Mrs. Almira H. Hadley, of Mooresville, have given descriptions of this work. Sometimes the sheep were washed in a running stream before shearing, but more often the sheared wool was taken through a process similar to the family washing (minus the boiling) and spread on the grass to dry. Mrs. Netterville mentions the old method of heating the water outdoors in big iron kettles hung on a pole with forks at each end, over a fire. When the wool was ready for the picking, the

neighbor women were invited in to do the work, which was followed by a dinner, making a most desirable gala occasion. A clean sheet was spread in the middle of the room on the floor and the women took up handfuls of the wool at a time, pulled it apart, and plucked back and forth until it was entirely free from any sediment, Spanish needles, or "stick tights." The cleaned wool was then tossed on the sheet in the center.

Carding was the next process, the cleaned wool being "combed" with the hand cards into so-called rolls for spinning. Later there were established "carding mills" to which the wool was taken to be carded. A distinctly middle-western story is that told by Lydia Morris Arnold, a pioneer teacher of Grant County, of the primitive methods of the carding mill. When the wool was carded at the carding mill, the rolls were "put in layers on the sheets the wool was brought to mill in, then rolled up very tight and pinned with thorns. My brother earned his first 'big money,' as he thought, by gathering thorns to sell to the proprietor of the mill at so much a dozen."¹

Spinning came next, the "big wheel" being used for this. F. M. Wiley, of Indianapolis, recalls from his boyhood that the wool was held at the end of the spindle till it twisted fast. Then the spinner whirled the wheel rapidly, walking backward, until the wool stretched out into a long thread. The spinner then stepped out from the wheel and stretched out an arm to keep the thread at such an angle that it would twist with the spindle but not wind up on it. When the twisting was completed, the spinner stepped in and held the thread close to the wheel so that it would wind up on the spindle as she walked forward again. Another roll was attached to the first by lapping the thin ends and holding them together with thumb and finger until they began to twist, then backward again as she drew out another thread. The thread thus spun was wound upon a clock reel, which, after a certain number of revolutions, would click, announcing that a "cut" had been spun.

¹Baldwin, Edgar M., *The Making of a Township*, p. 86 (Fairmount, Indiana, 1917).

The "cuts" thus prepared must next be dyed, a process which greatly taxed the ingenuity of the housewife who must find her materials for dyeing in roots, bark, flowers, and plants. Little did she guess how superior were her products to the aniline dyes which were destined to supplant them in the days when the machine would succeed the hand loom. Mrs. Mary Carter, founder of the English Society of Hand Weavers, a Scottish woman who learned the craft in her native village where spinning, dyeing, and weaving are done at home in the fashion of primitive days, in a recent article in *The Arts and Crafts*, published in London, says that despite the skill of the chemist and chemical knowledge used in the great dyeing works, vegetable dyes still maintain a superiority dependent upon quite simple qualities. These colors from vegetable dyes are full, lustrous, and bright, and have remarkable endurance. Even when considerably faded they keep their beauty and charm. Dyeing is a very distinctive process, and no two people can ever be depended upon to get exactly the same color. The individuality of each dyer comes out in the dyeing, just as the individuality of the musician comes out in the playing of a particular piece of music. It is this individuality in dyeing and weaving that doubtless gives the old coverlets half their charm.

The colors most frequently used were red and blue, combined with white, but many old coverlets are found in which are mingled green, pink, yellow, saffron, and purplish lavender, perhaps best described as wistaria. In her *Book of Hand-woven Coverlets* Eliza Calvert Hall gives many recipes for vegetable dyes which she got from mountain women in Kentucky and Tennessee. Very few recipes of this kind have been collected in Indiana, but the tradition has been handed down of dyeing dull yellow or butternut with the inner bark of the white walnut tree; and blue and red, with indigo and madder respectively. Hal C. Phelps, of Peru, took down from Mrs. Magdelen Hiner Wilson, of Miami County, Indiana, the dyes she used in coloring the yarn for a coverlet of the "Virginia Ring" pattern, made in 1850, and now in the historical museum at Peru.

For the blue used in this coverlet: rainwater and indigo in a sack; a handful of bran. Work the indigo in the sack with the hands each and every day until it is dissolved. Let it work or ferment until it has a bad odor. Then place the material in it to be dyed and heat it or boil it until it has the desired depth of color.

For red: water, and a handful of bran and madder. Place in a kettle and scald. Place the yarn in the kettle and heat it, boiling until the desired color is obtained.

For green and yellow: smart weed in water makes yellow. Peach leaves in water make green. Place material to be colored in this liquid and boil. All these are fast colors. For walnut brown, boil white walnut bark in kettle and then put in yarn or material and boil until the light or dark brown desired is obtained.

C. G. McNeill, of Cincinnati, formerly of Perrysville, Indiana, writes as follows of the blue coverlet dyes.

The old coverlet dyes were mostly home made, and the one color that seems to have in greatest degree the charm of remaining fresh and bright through all the years was the blue, the indigo which was home-made from home-grown plants.

I have known two garden beds of indigo which were in recent existence; one is still in growth and plants are given away to visitors at an old Ohio home. My grandmother, Hannah Maher McNeill, had such a garden at Perrysville which was still kept to the fourth generation of her family and may be growing yet. I have not been there in the growing season for several years, and do not know whether it still exists or not. The house passed out of the family and the bed, about 4x12 feet, may not have been preserved by the present occupants.

What sometimes seems to be an additional color in a design is due to the ingenuity of the old weaver, who discovered that "warping" or twisting two threads of different colors tightly gave the effect of a different color. Dark red and blue twisted tightly gave the effect of brown, and two different shades of blue gave a third entirely different.

While no one thought, before it was too late, to take down the recipes for vegetable dyes used by these pioneer Indiana women, there is every reason to believe that they were fully as adept with the dye pot as were their Kentucky and Tennessee and North Carolina sisters, and the proof of this statement is to be found in the beautiful greens, reds, and blues, with an occasional touch of wistaria in the "double rose" designs of Henry Adolph, and the blue, old rose, and pale yellow of one of F. A. Kean's coverlets, to say nothing of other, unknown weavers whose work has been preserved.

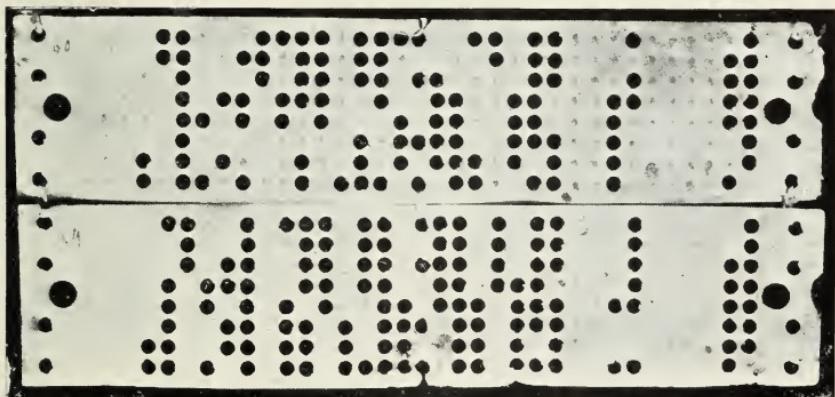
The wool being carded, spun, and dyed, its disposition must next be decided by the pioneer housewife. Before the day of the professional weaver, the "single" coverlet was woven by some member of the household, or a woman of some other household who had time for such work outside her round of daily duties. As has already been said, the hand loom was an important part of the family equipment. Hal C. Phelps, of Peru, quotes an interview with Mrs. Mary M. Phelps Miller, then eighty-eight years old, whose mother and grandmother had learned the art of coverlet weaving in New York state. The loom, according to Mrs. Miller, occupied a small room in the house, and her grandmother warned her, as a child, not to touch anything about it for fear she would break a thread. Mrs. Miller, when a young woman, with her mother worked with the wool from the time it was sheared until it became the finished coverlet. Mrs. D. A. Porter, of Orleans, Indiana, tells the story of her aunt, Mollie Bowman, of Morgan County, who brought her hand loom from North Carolina and did weaving for people in her neighborhood.

Having decided to weave a coverlet, and having her material prepared, the next decision must be the selection of the pattern. Many of these "single" coverlets are to be found in Indiana; many were woven in this state by the old patterns of colonial days, still preserved in the remote districts of the Appalachian mountains where Elizabethan English is still spoken. I have seen in many Indiana coverlet exhibits the familiar patterns, "King's Flower," "Sunrise," "Pine Bloom," "Cat Track," "Single Chariot Wheels," "Double Chariot Wheels," "Snail Trail," and others. Some of the "drafts," by following which the weaver evolved the chosen pattern, have been preserved. At first glance, one might easily take them for bars of music, but on looking closely, he sees, instead of notes on the lines and spaces, numbers, or—in the more primitive ones—marks to indicate numbers. This was probably done for those—and there were many at that time—who could not read; two marks stood for the figure two, eight for the figure eight, and so on. These

	3	4	8	2		8	4	9	2	1	2
2	9	4	8	2	2	8	4	9	3	2	
2	3	4	8	2	2	8	4	9	2	1	
9	4	8	2	2	2	8	4	9	2	2	

Hoozir Beauty

DRAFT FOR SINGLE COVERLET



PROFESSIONAL WEAVER'S PATTERN
John La Tourette, Fountain County



KEAN COVERLET, VIGO COUNTY



SINGLE COVERLET, FOUNTAIN COUNTY HOUSEWIFE

doubtless denoted the number of times the shuttle was to be thrown.

The late Arthur Osborn, of Spiceland, Indiana, had a large collection of these very old, crude patterns, some of them found in this state, others, in North Carolina. Probably one of the most unique articles in the history of hand-woven fabrics is a little home-made handbook of coverlet designs which he found at Staley, Chatham County, North Carolina, some years ago and purchased of Miss Lylna Jane Cooper, an aged woman who had used it in her youth.

Back in 1828 some humble weaver of coverlets with beauty in her soul, desiring to keep her patterns in permanent form, made, with the crude materials at her disposal, this little book, eight inches in length, seven inches wide, and containing thirty-six pages. The cardboard cover, of a softness and pliability that suggests leather, is embellished outside and in with coverlet patterns in blue and white. Inside, drawn by the same painstaking hand, with a goosequill pen, on soft, hand-made linen paper, are the coverlet patterns, colored blue and white, a most difficult task, requiring many fine lines and squares. On the opposite pages are the drafts for the weaver, strange designs, meaningless to us, with marks instead of figures, directing the weaver how many times to throw the shuttle through the warp strung on her loom. Beneath the drafts are written the names: "Single Chariot Wheels," "Twelve Snowballs," "Floating Diamond," "Double Compass," "Rings and Roses," and several others.

On the first page of this little book, instead of a draft are twenty-one closely written lines. "Process to dye cotton or linnen turkey-red with—" and then follows, of all things, a cipher! A cipher in the North Carolina mountains in 1828! Mr. Osborn explained the cipher in this way. These women weavers of early days guarded the secrets of their art jealously. The red dye made of madder used at that time was a dull and rather ugly color, which, if boiled too long, became brown. The maker of this little pattern book had doubtless discovered

some plant decoction by which she could dye a color approximating the beautiful color known as turkey-red, and set it down in cipher so that no one else could steal her secret. Alas! among the old linsey-clad women with whom he talked and of one of whom he purchased this book, he could find none who could read this cipher.

Mrs. Valina (Reynolds) Millis, of Guilford College, North Carolina, upon seeing the book recognized the handwriting and code used in the directions for "Dyeing Cotton or Linnen Turkey Red" as those of her Aunt Delilah Reynolds, of lower Guilford County, North Carolina, since she was familiar with a diary and notes of Delilah Reynolds in the same handwriting and code.

ALPHABET AND CODE

a-1	y-6
e-2	t-7
i-3	n-8
o-4	v-9
u-5	r-0

PROCESS TO DYE COTTON OR LINNEN TURKEY RED, 29th, 11mo., 1829.

First—make a lye of one part of good potash, dissolved in four parts boiling water; then slack a half part of lime in it, next dissolve one part powdered alum in two parts boiling water and whilst this last solution is warm, pour the lye gradually into it, stirring and mixing them well together. Then add to the above mixture, thirty-third part of flaxseed oil, which when well mixed with it, will form a rich milky substance, resembling thick cream. As the skeins of cotton are dipt into this alkaline mixture it must be stirred, as the oil will rise up to the top of it when at rest. To ascertain the respective parts of the different ingredients as named above, they must all be weighed, beginning with the water first, of which there must be enough to permit each skein of cotton to be entirely immersed in it.

Before the cotton or flax thread, when that is to be dyed, [is] dipped into alkaline mixture, it must first be well bleached and cleaned by washing, of every foreign extraneous substance; then boiled in strong lye made of potash, and dipped into alkaline mixture while it is hot and as wet as it [can] well be, when the lye is well gotten out of it by drawing the skeins through the hands until they become well soaked. As each skein undergoing the above process [is finished], it is to be put upon a pole in the shade to dry. After remaining in that state for twenty-four hours, they must be well washed in pure running or rain water, and again dried, after which they are to be washed in a strong lye of good hickory ashes (or better, of potash).

Surely, however, he is lacking in imagination who can look at this thing of beauty—for the correctness of line of this little book, its soft coloring, and the sincerity with which it was wrought, do make it beautiful—and not feel a thrill at the thought of the woman in her isolated mountain home who so long ago sought thus to express her love of color and form.

The state of Pennsylvania cherishes in its museum as one of the most interesting documents in American hand weaving a book of coverlet patterns which had belonged to John Landes, of whom nothing is known save that he was an itinerant coverlet weaver. These patterns have recently been published by the Shuttlecraft Guild, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, because of the revival of interest in hand weaving, and particularly in hand-woven coverlets, throughout the country. Some of the Landes patterns are identical with those of the Osborn book, but the Landes patterns have no such artistic form as has the North Carolina booklet, which should be preserved in a museum in this state to which Mr. Osborn brought it.

Among the separate drafts in Mr. Osborn's collection, some of them pinned together with hand-made pins which have held them in place since 1828, is one of the rare and much-prized "Bonaparte's March," and the pattern owner's name, "Jane Ward."

The pioneers who brought their hand looms with them, or who constructed them after their arrival, were compelled at first to crowd them into the one-room cabin, or in a small room built off to one side. Later, the people of greater means built loom houses where the weaving could be carried on without interruption. The description of an old Indiana loom house which follows comes from the pen of Charles G. McNeill.

The noise of a loom was considerable. The clicking of the shuttle, the beating of the reeds against the web, the shifting of the treadles and the heddles would all begin when other work about the house was done. It might last an hour or all day, or perhaps well into the night. These noises, if in the dwelling, would waken a sleeping baby, disturb the rest of the aged members of the family, or prove quite annoying to any who were sick. So in many pioneer families where there was much weaving to do, it was found a great advantage to have the loom in a separate building.

Then, too, the storage of materials, of finished products, and of the extra equipment of the loom took space that could be provided in a loom house better than in a living room.

The same loom would be used for various kinds of weaving; fine linens or coarse, woolens of various grades including blankets, and even carpets, could all be had from the same loom by changing reeds, heddles, etc. There would be need for storage room for these extra parts which might seem unsightly in a dwelling. Even the loom, though sometimes its posts and beams were carved and nicely finished, could hardly be thought an adornment, and the space in a dwelling which such things might occupy could be put to other use. Young children, too, might injure some of the parts, such as the reeds. One can see that in many families there was real need for a loom house.

I am fortunate to be able to send you two good pictures of the only family loom house I know of that is in a good state of preservation. I do not know its age. It is at Perrysville, Indiana. The first settlers there came prior to 1824. The town was platted that year. I think the land on which it stands was doubtless "taken up" about one hundred years ago, or perhaps a little earlier, and that this loom house is well along towards one hundred year old.

It stands on a bluff in a bend of the Wabash River, almost directly across the street from the old seminary (now used as a grade school) and the new high school. About half way down the bluff a wonderful spring of water bursts out from a great crevasse in the rock which underlies the region and right at its origin is a stream as large as a man's arm, sleeve and all.

In the old days when the well at the seminary got out of order, the school was permitted to get its water supply from this spring. A couple of boys would be sent like Jack and Jill "down the hill to fetch a pail of water." Each of the four rooms had its pail and dipper. They must pass right by the loom house to get to the spring; but I suspect that few, very few, knew that it was or ever had been a loom house. They perhaps thought it was an old smoke house. Who ever heard of a two-story smoke house! It ceased to be used as a loom house about seventy or eighty years ago, however, when a woolen factory was erected at the other side of town by B. W. Riggs & Company. Home weaving, except rag carpets, soon thereafter was discontinued throughout the neighborhood.

This house belonged to a Mrs. Carter, now long dead, and stands directly in front of the dwelling, though in the side yard. Mrs. Carter's brothers, Hiram and Lemuel Chenoweth, settled on the next two farms south. Hiram's children still own all three of the properties. Mrs. Carter lived to great age. One son died from wounds and exposure in the Union army during the Civil War. Another son, Richard, also a Union soldier, served as county clerk at Newport, Vermilion County. His daughter, Grace, now Mrs. Bird Davis, assists her husband in editing and publishing the *Newport Hoosier State*. She was born at the old Carter home at Perrysville and in her childhood played all around, and in, and perhaps over, this old loom house. And, oh, what a play house it must have been!

After the seminary was built and students came from all over the county, and from other counties, and from Illinois, they found boarding places among various families in the village, and some at least "kept back." Among the latter were Martin J. Barger and Samuel M. Barger, brothers who came from Illinois. These two boys rented this old loom

house and kept bachelor hall in it, cooking and studying down stairs and sleeping upstairs. It doubtless made very comfortable students' quarters and certainly was convenient to the school.

The loom house was probably built by a Mr. Benefiel, a carpenter by trade, one of the earliest settlers in Perrysville, coming there from Kentucky over a century ago.

PROFESSIONAL WEAVERS

As the state became more thickly settled and the people became more prosperous, the professional coverlet weaver appeared, a man who had learned the art of "double weaving" in Europe, and who came out to the middle-western states, and set up his elaborate looms in the towns or in some prosperous settlement in the country. As will be seen in the account of Indiana professional weavers which follows this, some of these men came alone, and some came with their brothers, all skilled in the trade. That there was a great demand for their work is shown by the account of William Muir and his brothers, of whom it was said that their work was promised as far ahead as three years, and that they sat at their looms for hours without sleep in order to get their work out at the time it was promised.

The housewife's joy can be imagined at the thought that now she was to be relieved of the tedious labor of weaving, and was also to be able to possess bed covers of more elaborate and beautiful patterns. As before, she prepared the wool, dyed it, and when it was all ready, carried it to the weaver. Mrs. J. J. Netterville, of Anderson, remembers, as a little girl, going with her mother in the wagon driven by her father to the home of William Hicks, a weaver, on Killbuck Creek, Madison County, and playing about while her mother selected the patterns for her coverlets.

These "double" coverlet patterns were many and elaborate. In the Indiana collections are found many "double" coverlets in the "Lover's Knot," the "Double Roses," "Frenchman's Fancy," "Liberty," and other elaborate designs known in other states as well as many presumably original designs. They could be woven in blue and white, red and white, or in mixtures of red, white, and blue, varied with the warping, or in other colors

if the housewife could prepare them. These "double coverlets" were woven almost always in two strips, as were the "single" ones, but occasionally some weaver possessed a double loom and wove the coverlet in one piece. Few of these one-piece coverlets were woven in Indiana; it is probable that most of those now in Indiana came from Pennsylvania or Ohio, where many such skilled weavers abounded.

The "double coverlet" had, usually, borders along the two sides, and across the lower end. The reason for not weaving a border across the top is evident—pillows covered this end of the coverlet. These coverlets overhung the high "poster" bed, and the end came out under the turned or straight piece at the foot which usually connected the two posts. It was a pretty fancy of the weavers to make this lower border different from the two sides, and one rarely finds a coverlet with the three borders alike. In the corners of this lower border, the weaver sometimes wove his "trade-mark," a subject which will be discussed later.

On the occasion of a visit to the Fountain County, Indiana, home of the LaTourettes, the description of weaving on the "double" coverlet loom was given the writer some years ago by Captain Schuyler LaTourette, son of the famous John LaTourette, weaver, a sketch of whose life appears later in this pamphlet.² Captain LaTourette, who died in March, 1926, was so brisk in movement and so gay in manner as to give the impression of being much younger than eighty-eight, which age he claimed at that time. His French inheritance was evident in every look, word, and gesture; his intelligence and his interest in every subject made his conversation delightful. He related the history of the family, showed us the old family Bible with the records, and deplored the fact that his father had changed his name from Jean to John.

Captain LaTourette did not learn the art of coverlet weaving, but his brother Henry, who also lived in this county, was an

²See *post*, p. 419.

expert weaver who carried on the business for twenty years. He gave us an elaborate description of the process, however; calling the making of double coverlets "division weaving," as did Arthur Osborn, a very good descriptive name. The patterns were of heavy cardboard (we saw some later, looking much as music rolls for the pianola except that the holes are much larger). These patterns came in strips fifteen inches long and three and a half inches wide, and were joined together to make a strip half the width of one of the strips that make half a finished coverlet. These strips, numbered and joined together by threads, turned on a metal cylinder and there were needles which fitted into the perforations. Complicated as this sounds, it is nothing to what is to come. There were linen threads weighted at one end and controlled by what he called "hand holts." There were many treadles, and the weaver, who sat before the loom, must feel for the pedals with his foot, much as does the performer on the pipe organ, throw the shuttle, reach up without looking to catch the proper one of the many "hand holts," release it, catch the returning shuttle, and so on. The more I heard the process described, the less I understood it, but nevertheless it was interesting to hear Mr. LaTourette describe his father's skill in weaving, how he could throw the shuttle so fast that one could hardly see it, how he and his daughter could reach up without looking and unerringly take the proper "hand holt," and how much he enjoyed standing by and seeing the pattern reveal itself as the fabric grew.

"If I could see a loom, perhaps I could have a better idea of how it was all done," I said to Mr. Fred LaTourette, a nephew. "What is left of the old loom is out here," he said, and took me out to where he had dragged out the loom just before the original log house, used as a loom house, had fallen to ruin. We looked with awe at this old loom, to which some of the threads and needles are still attached. Lying around it were some of the cardboard patterns, which have defied the weather, even to the penciling which indicates their number.

Some of the professional weavers in this and in other states

made a practice of weaving on the two lower corners of the coverlet, making the device on one corner right side out, and wrong side on the other, so that whichever side of the cover was put "up" on the bed, the inscription might be read. The "double" coverlet repeats the design on the so-called wrong side, with colors reversed. Sometimes these weavers wove only the date, as "1846," in a square; sometimes they wove their full names and the date; again, the name or initials of the owner of the coverlet, the weaver's name, place of residence, and date; sometimes a design of some sort and the date. So far as I have been able to learn, the suggestion that this device was a trade-mark, used by the weaver to identify his coverlets, was made for the first time by William Ross Teel, of Indianapolis, who has a number of rare hand-woven coverlets. Since Mr. Teel has made this suggestion, I have been able to identify a number of trade-marks, and thus to discover the weavers of some beautiful coverlets. Other trade-marks still remain a mystery to be solved by some future student of the art of coverlet weaving. It has been observed that sometimes these coverlet weavers changed their trade-marks, as in the case of William Craig, Sr., or that some other weaver of the same name endeavored, by a different trade-mark to maintain his identity, as may be the case with F. A. Kean. It should be noted that some professional coverlet weavers never used a name, date, or emblem as a mark for their work. I have never seen a coverlet of the beautiful "Lover's Knot" with pine tree border pattern, a very old Colonial design by the way, marked in any way.

The student of these trade-marks will find much to confuse him. He must remember always that the old abbreviation of Indiana was "Ia." ; that when William Craig wove "Greensburg, D. C. Ia." in the corner of his coverlets he meant Decatur County, Indiana; that when J. Craig wove F. L. County, he meant Floyd County.

Some mystery surrounds the markings found on the William Craig coverlets, the Greensburg weaver whose history appears later in this pamphlet. It is believed by some that he did not



DOUBLE COVERLET, CRAIG TRADE-MARK



CRAIG COVERLET, DECATUR COUNTY
Note Different Trade-mark



GRAHAM COVERLET, HENRY COUNTY



GILMORE COVERLET, UNION COUNTY

adopt a trade-mark until later in his career, and that some of his coverlets bear neither name nor emblem, but merely a date. While the "crossed pipes" has become his familiar trade-mark, and is believed to have been adopted after 1853, he, or his son William also used a bell-shaped flower, and a house for trade-marks besides the frequent use of his name, and the words "Decatur county, Ia." Favorite Craig patterns help also to identify these coverlets—borders of bell-shaped blossoms, of birds feeding their young, a church with high steeple. Some believe that the unmarked coverlets were woven by the younger Craig.

A coverlet woven by J. Craig bears the trade-mark, "J. Craig, 2 miles N. East of Greensburg, D. C. Ia., 1854." Another coverlet marked J. Craig also bears the mark, "Andersonville, F. L. [Floyd] County, Ia." This may have been the same J. Craig in another location.

David I. Graves's trade-mark was a square containing his initials "D. I. G." and the date of the weaving. Sometimes he inserted the initials of the owner of the coverlet; sometimes "Wayne county." Samuel Graham, of Newcastle, marked his coverlets with a queer sort of bird with outstretched wings and the date; never using his name. Joseph Gilmore, of Union County, had a little ship with date below for a trade-mark. A favorite lower border with him was a row of two-story houses, interspersed with branching trees and with a paling fence in front. A Henry Adolf trade-mark is "Henry Adolf, Hamildon county Indiana, 1851," the misspelling due, perhaps, to his German pronunciation. One of George Adolf's marks is "George Adolf, Peace and Plenty, 1857."

According to William R. Teel, F. A. Kean, a coverlet weaver of Vigo County, used a trade-mark with the words "Made by F. A. Kean 1838," and in the lower corners of the square, a pine tree, with crosses between. Mrs. Isaac Daniel, of Indianapolis, has a coverlet woven at Peeden's Mill near Charlestown, Indiana, marked with a basket of flowers in the center of the corner square, and below the basket the words, "Made by F. A.

Kean, 1846." This opens the question as to whether this was the same man who changed his location or was an itinerant weaver, or whether there were two men of the same name pursuing the business of coverlet weaving in this state. Another Kean coverlet has been reported which has the date 1846, and the name F. A. Kean is in the tapestry weave, a flattened weave, rather rare and very beautiful.

Eliza Calvert Hall in her *Book of Hand-woven Coverlets* mentions the names of three Indiana professional weavers of coverlets, John LaTourette (or rather, she gives the name of his daughter, Sarah, who worked with him), Ann Hay, and John Getty. The last named did not exist, as least as a weaver of coverlets. Ann Hay married a man named Getty, and Mrs. Hall jumped at the conclusion that he was John Getty, of Lockport, New York, a coverlet weaver. Information from her grandchildren would lead to the belief that Ann Hay was not a weaver of coverlets, at all. With her father and mother she came direct from Scotland to Jefferson County, Indiana, and settled near the Carmel Presbyterian Church. She married Andrew Getty and reared five children. After Mr. Getty's death she married James Oldfield and lived for a short time in Lexington, Indiana, near Chelsea, about one mile from the Scott County line. Later the house was bought by Andrew Getty, her grandson. She was buried in the Carmel Presbyterian cemetery in Jefferson County. Miss Getty, her granddaughter, seems doubtful that her grandmother ever wove coverlets. There were coverlets in her possession, one dated 1854, probably woven by some professional weaver for whom she had prepared the material.³

A study of the art of coverlet weaving in this state within the past ten years, however, reveals the fact that Indiana has had more than forty coverlet weavers whose names and in some cases complete histories have been discovered. These names and histories follow, together with an account of coverlet weav-

³Notes concerning Ann Hay were furnished by Miss Permelia Boyd, of Scott County.

ing in Switzerland County, Indiana, prepared by Mrs. A. V. Danner, of Vevay.

WILLIAM CRAIG

The story of William Craig, coverlet weaver, comes from his granddaughter, Mrs. Rena Craig Gilchrist,⁴ of Greensburg, who writes:

Many homes in Decatur, Rush, Shelby, and adjoining counties have one, two or more double coverlets which are heirlooms. Not many know the history of an industry which gave occupation and livelihood to the few who knew the process by which these valuable and beautiful bedspreads were produced. They only know that in some way they possess rare and intricate patterns in their spreads; that they seem to be everlasting in their durability of color and texture; and some properly value them as relics, which, if lost, can never be replaced, as double coverlet weaving is a lost art. The looms were intricate and differed from other looms, and have all been destroyed. Many of the patterns have been preserved, but are entirely beyond the comprehension of those now living, and with the passing of a very few of the older people of our community, no one will be left who ever saw them woven.

William Craig, Sr., a Scotchman born in Kilmarnock in 1800, came to America in 1820, landing in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1821 he was joined by some of his brothers and sisters and several members of a family of his friends named Gilchrist: One of these, Jane Gilchrist, was his sweetheart, and they were married as soon as she landed. Two of the Gilchrists were weavers. All were young, and there were only two married couples in the company; these made homes for the others and the closest friendships always existed among them. They brought with them looms and necessary equipment for weaving.

We will not dwell upon the years intervening between their landing and 1832, when all but one family reached Mt. Carmel, Indiana, except to say that William Craig, Sr., was foreman in a large eastern cotton goods factory during that time. There was some weaving done in Mt. Carmel, but the people were all busy for some years in clearing their land and building houses, using their spare time in weaving, yet there were homes well supplied with the beautiful covers. Farmers kept sheep, clipped wool, washed and dyed it, then took it with a cotton warp to the weaver. They were the cheapest bedclothes they could get, besides being the most beautiful outside covers.

At the weaver's, the yarn was spooled and carefully "set up" and tied into the loom. This, we remember, was the most particular part of the process. The patterns must be copied exactly, the knots tied with speed,

⁴Mrs. Gilchrist is the only surviving child of William Craig, Jr. In preparing this article she was assisted by John M. Craig, and Mrs. Elizabeth Craig Perry, only surviving children of James Craig, and Mrs. Jennie Reeves Moore, only surviving child of Jane Craig Reeves, all grandchildren of William Craig, Sr., all living in Greensburg. All, says Mrs. Gilchrist, have seen and known personally of the double coverlet weaving.

security, flatness, and precision; hence, the weaver's knot was always used. If the thread broke or the slightest imperfection appeared, it was darned so that an expert could not detect it.

In 1838 William Craig, Sr., brought his family to Decatur County, locating on a farm three and a half miles northeast of Greensburg, and there again set up his loom and was assisted in spare time in weaving by his two sons, James and William, Jr. The father spent much time on the loom until after the Civil War. James married in 1846 and lived in Anderson for eight years as a weaver, supplying the adjoining community with these popular spreads. William, Jr., married in 1845 and located his home and shop in Greensburg where, for eight years, he kept at the loom constantly.

Coverlet weaving became a large industry. People drove in farm wagons fifty and sixty miles, often bringing material for enough coverlets to supply each child at marriage, always leaving some in the home. Often after show days and big campaign days the shop was filled and the weaver had all he could weave in six months.

In 1853 William, Jr., exchanged with his father, he taking the farm, his father taking the shop, and until William, Sr., retired, the demand for coverlets continued. He later moved to Milford or Clifty, where he died in 1880. When the looms were taken down and stored they soon became junk, and there is nothing left of them.

William Craig, Sr., was a cousin of Matthew Young and James Craig, of Canton, Indiana, who wove extensively in that part of the state. It is no wonder that these beautiful pieces are found all over the world, when they were for many years a necessary part of a child's dowry and have never been known to wear out.

JAMES CRAIG

The following account of James Craig is furnished by C. L. Trueblood, of Washington County, Indiana.

My first recollection of James Craig, a Scotchman who was a weaver, begins about 1850. He was living near my home in Canton, Indiana, and his family and my mother being on intimate terms, I had frequent opportunities to watch him at his work, weaving coverlets. He had a shop on the southeast corner of his lot, where he dwelt, facing on the street. The shop was used exclusively for the loom and his work.

I was much interested in watching his operation in weaving and the construction of the loom, which was different from any other loom I have ever seen in that the threads of the warp were each run through a loop of cords to which were attached leaden weights about the size of an ordinary lead pencil, and I should think from twelve to fifteen inches in length. I do not remember accurately about that. The other end of each cord was attached to a pedal, of which there was a considerable number. A number of cords may have been attached to a pedal, according to the colors and figures being used. This enabled him to depress any of the threads of the warp that he pleased by operating the pedals with his feet, thus opening a space for the passing of the shuttle, of which he used as many as he wished colors in the pattern. By this means he was able to expose or cover any of the colors at his pleasure, thus being

able to produce figures in the proper colors. He sat on a long bench in front of the loom so that he could operate the pedals with his feet.

I remember James Craig as a man of medium weight, rather heavy for his height, and I think he had blue eyes. He was not given to sport, was rather of a reflective disposition, pretty well fixed in his opinions, and very neat in his habits. His wife was Margaret Craig. They lost two children by Asiatic cholera in 1852.

Mrs. James Young, of Evanston, Illinois, writes of James Craig:

James Craig, coverlet weaver, of Canton, Indiana, was my father, and Matthew Young, also a weaver, was my husband's father. William Craig, Jr., coverlet weaver, was the son of James Craig. James Craig was born in Kilmarnock, Scotland, June 17, 1819, one of a family of ten children. He died in Brazil, Indiana, August 23, 1896. I remember the old loom very vividly. It was taken to Michigan, where we lived for a while, but never used, and I suppose it went for junk after father's death.

SAMUEL GRAHAM

Clarence H. Smith, curator of the Henry County Historical Museum, has furnished the following information concerning the weaver Samuel Graham.

Samuel Graham, the coverlet weaver of Newcastle, was an Englishman by birth, a native of Lancashire, coming to this country from Darwen, a manufacturing city, long noted for its mills and weaving industries, some eighteen miles distant from that busy metropolis, Manchester. It seems probable that he belonged to the middle class, perhaps to a well-to-do manufacturing family. This I infer from the money that came to the family in later years. He was born on July 11, 1805, and when eighteen years of age, came to the United States. Landing in New York, he seems to have stayed there or in Philadelphia for a short time, and then to have joined the great stream of emigrants who were moving to the "great new west," as the states beyond the Alleghenies were called by the easterners. I wish we might know what caused this young man to choose the little county seat of Henry County, of about two hundred inhabitants, as the place for his abode. Was it, I wonder, the business enterprise of the postmaster, who was an old Indian trader, Isaac Bedsaul, or that of his newly arrived competitor, Miles Murphy? Or perhaps it was the legal mind of Jacob Thornburg, or Samuel Hoover, or the deeply religious character of that early Methodist, Father Coleman? Or it may have been the untiring efforts and sacrifices during the dread scourge of cholera that year of Dr. Joel or Dr. John Elliott, the county clerk, who fell a victim to the disease after caring for the many sick, that influenced the young artisan to stay in Newcastle. I doubt not at all that these sterling citizens had an influence on his choice, but I would say that, as usual, in the affairs of men, fate played a part.

Soon after coming to Newcastle, the young Englishman, Graham, established a loom for weaving coverlets. His daughter, Lucy Graham

Clark, of Dixon, Illinois, thinks that upon first coming to the county, her father wove at the McAfee-Mowrer Woolen Mills near Hillsboro, later known as the Blue River Woollen Mills, although my impression is that these mills were not in operation until about 1841. Mr. Graham purchased the old log courthouse, a small two-story affair, and for some years plied his trade in the upper room. For over twenty years he carried on a thriving business here and in other locations. His reputation became established, and many from adjoining counties brought their wool, all cleaned, carded, and ready to be made into his attractive coverlets. One of the boys of that day recalls how, as children, they used to go up and watch Mr. Graham at his loom; but he was a dour Englishman, stern and unapproachable, and not attentive to his children visitors.

Probably at the time he wove in the old courthouse, he was living at the present corner of Walnut and Twelfth streets, but more people here today remember him while he resided at the northwest corner of Walnut and Fourteenth, in a house that is still standing. In the back part of this, or it may be in a part separate on Walnut Street, Mr. Graham had his loom. Mrs. Clark says that about 1858 or 1859 Mr. Graham went to Cadiz. I do not know whether it was before or after his residence there that he moved on a farm where he also had a loom, located about where the Weiland greenhouses stand, near the Mahlon Harvey place.

Mr. Graham had a brother of much wealth in England, who was anxious for him to return to his native land. He gave him a large sum of money, saying that he wanted his relatives to have the good of the property during his life. After his death, however, each of the three children of Samuel Graham received five thousand pounds from his estate. This was in 1874. About 1863 Mr. Graham took his family to England, where they stayed until 1865 or 1866, when they returned to Newcastle. Mr. Graham did not weave after his return. He lived on East Broad Street, also on the Boone Highway, or Haguewood farm, two miles northeast of town. His sons also bought large farms north of town. Mr. Graham died in 1871; his widow in 1881. A granddaughter, Mrs. Asa Hernly, is the only descendant living in the state.

Mr. Smith gives a human touch to his portrait of the "dour Englishman" by describing his fondness for the game of checkers, to which he gave much time, always being able to defeat his rivals, one of them Edmund Johnson, a prominent member of the Henry County bar. A portrait in oil of Mr. Graham, by a contemporary artist, hangs in the Henry County Museum.

JOHN KLEIN

A weaver named Klein, Kline, or Cline, lived in Noblesville, Hamilton County, in 1861. "J. Klein, Hamilton county, Indiana—1859" is one of his woven marks. Mr. J. F. Kline, of Noblesville, son of the weaver, gives his father's name as Klein, stating:

The Klein mentioned by Madge Demerit, of Connersville, was John Klein who came to Hamilton County in the early fifties and established his coverlet loom in the home of Martin Forrer, about three miles southeast of Noblesville, where he received the wool direct from the farmers and put it through the different processes of manufacture by hand and returned to them the finished product. He was an expert in making fast-color dyes as proved by the present condition of his handiwork. He continued weaving at this place until 1857 when he married Lydia Heiny, of Clarksville, and moved to Noblesville and continued weaving in his house until 1861. At this time he and his brother purchased a woolen mill located at the corner of Conner and Sixth streets in this city, where now stands a flour mill. He moved his loom to the third floor of the building. This mill and contents were destroyed by fire about 1864. There are a great many of these coverlets in Hamilton County, and adjoining counties to my knowledge, as I have investigated in my effort to procure some of them, but have been unsuccessful so far. He always wove his name and the date in the corner of the coverlets. Being his son, I am greatly interested in this matter and would greatly appreciate any assistance in procuring a specimen of his handiwork. When a child, I spent many hours watching him weave, and in winding bobbins for him.

JOHN MUIR

John Muir, a weaver of coverlets, ingrain carpets, silk plaids, and Paisley shawls, was born December 4, 1812 in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland. His father, Thomas Muir, weaver, was born near Glasgow, Scotland. John was well educated in the parish schools, and at the age of twelve years applied himself to the loom. In 1834 Mr. Muir was married to Harriet P. Gilchrist, who was born July 8, 1812. Kilmarnock was their home city and here he worked at his loom almost seven years. On May 15, 1841 they and their four children set sail from Glasgow in the American vessel "Oglethorpe" and landed in New York on August 3, having been on the water seventy-eight days. They stayed in New York three days to buy some necessary equipment for weaving, then went by rail to Pittsburgh, by boat to Cincinnati, and by wagon to Germantown, Ohio, remaining there until February 18, 1842 when they continued on their journey, driving on to Richmond, Indiana, thence to Indianapolis, arriving at Greencastle in February, 1843. Mr. Muir set up his loom at Greencastle and wove coverlets and carpets, but soon afterward he moved to a small tract of land on the Danville road about five miles east of Greencastle. Here his home

and household goods were destroyed by fire, but he saved the material that his patrons had brought him to be woven into coverlets, there being enough to keep his loom going for one year. He then located at Filmore and continued his weaving until 1859 when he moved to Parke County, locating about three miles southeast of Mansfield. Here he bought 520 acres of land and remained until his death, June 23, 1892.

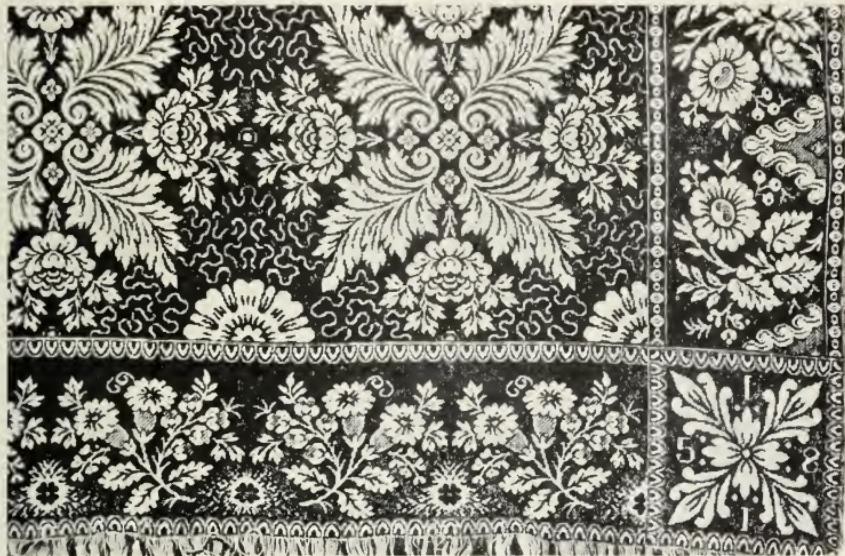
One of his brothers, William Muir, came from Scotland to Indianapolis at an earlier date and wove coverlets, but later went to the south part of Clay County and bought several acres of land in the Eel River bottom. One of his daughters, Mrs. Viola Peavey, lives at Clay City. John Muir's son James helped his father weave in later years. James was born in Scotland, December 29, 1840, and died in Indianapolis June 25, 1921. Two other sons—Thomas, who was born in Scotland, and William, the first child born in America—were soldiers in the Union army during the Civil War.⁵

WILLIAM MUIR

The following information about William Muir was given by George Branson, of Brazil, Indiana. It will be noticed that the account differs in some details from the above information given by members of the Muir family.

William Muir was born March 9, 1818, at Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland. His father, Thomas Muir, was a weaver and when William was six years old, he was apprenticed as a draw boy and later he was placed at the loom and taught to weave silk fabrics, and later to weave Paisley shawls and coverlets. In 1836 he came to America, landing at New York after a stormy voyage of sixty-five days. He came to Germantown, Wayne County, Indiana, where his brother, John Muir, resided and continued weaving. In 1842, he moved to Indianapolis, where he operated three looms for a period of eight years. While in Indianapolis, he exchanged some unprofitable railroad stock for a tract of land in the south part of Clay County and by purchasing adjacent tracts became one of the largest land holders in the county. A beautiful lake near this tract of land is known as Muir's lake.

⁵For most of this history of John Muir, the writer is indebted to his two grandsons, Elmer Muir, of Parke County, and Charles Muir, of Indianapolis. Mr. Muir wove many coverlets in Parke County, his patrons coming from an extensive territory, and bringing their material ready for the loom.



MUIR COVERLET, CLAY COUNTY



DOUBLE COVERLET, WEAVER UNKNOWN

Owned by Mrs. Ann Mayer, Indianapolis



SEAMLESS DOUBLE COVERLET, SO-CALLED COLONIAL PATTERN



SEAMLESS DOUBLE COVERLET, WILD TURKEY CORNER DESIGN

According to his daughter, his only schooling was in night schools, but he was really a well educated man. He carried the brand of his early work at the looms, for the tendons of both of his little fingers were severed, causing his fingers to be deformed. The four brothers, Robert, William, John, and Thomas, worked at the looms together for some time. William Muir said once that their work was promised ahead as far as three years, and that they sat at the looms for hours without sleep, except as they dropped their heads on the looms for a few minutes at a time for a nap, this, in order to get their work out at the time it was promised.

JOHN LA TOURETTE

Among the professional coverlet weavers in Indiana, the best known was John S. LaTourette, of Fountain County, and his daughter Sarah, who were widely known for the beauty and perfection of their work.⁶ A branch of this family came to America and settled on Staten Island in 1773. John, a son of the emigrant, came out to Ohio in 1820, and to Fountain County, Indiana, in 1826. The family had been weavers in France, and brought the art with them to the new world. John LaTourette bought land on Graham's Creek, Fountain County, and built a log cabin near the creek in 1826. In 1839 he built a brick house on the hill above the creek, a mansion in its day, with central hall, wide fireplaces, panelled woodwork, no two floors on the same level. The brick for this house was made on the place: the surface soil was taken off, the clay dug and moistened with water from Graham's creek and trampled by oxen to the proper consistency. When the house was complete, the log cabin was brought up the hill and set beside the house for use as a loom house. A grandson, Fred LaTourette, lives in the house and his uncle, Captain Schuyler LaTourette, lived in a house nearby until his death in 1926, when past ninety.

FRANCIS KEAN

Francis A. Kean lived and wove his coverlets about four miles east of Terre Haute on the National Road on what is known as the Kean farm, now the Catholic cemetery. Some of

⁶See *ante*, pp. 408-9.

his coverlet dates are 1838, 1844, 1851, according to W. R. Teel, of Indianapolis.

Mrs. Isaac Daniel, of Indianapolis, describes a beautiful double coverlet in her possession made at Peeden's Mill on the Charlestown-Henryville road about five miles north of Charlestown, Indiana. Each corner has an eight inch square with a basket of flowers in the center, and above the basket the words, "made by F. A. Kean," and under the basket the date 1846. "We do not know," says Mrs. Daniel, "whether F. A. Kean worked for Peeden or whether he was Peeden's successor." The question arises as to whether this was the Terre Haute Kean, who had a different trade-mark, or another Kean of the same name.

HUGH GILCHRIST

Hugh Gilchrist, born in Kilmarnock, Scotland, October 24, 1824, came to the United States at the age of twenty-two. He had learned the art of weaving in Scotland. Coming to Franklin County, Indiana, near Mt. Carmel, he and his brother entered one hundred and sixty acres, and on this farm built their loom house of logs, a building sixteen feet high, for the loom. He later moved to Decatur County, where he died. William Craig, the weaver, married Gilchrist's sister. These notes were given by the late George Gilchrist, of Indianapolis, the weaver's son.

DAVID GRAVES

David I. Graves is remembered by John Edwards, who lives near Monrovia. Mr. Edwards recalls the day of the carding factory, which superseded the pioneer housewife's carding of the wool. As a boy he worked in this factory and recalls the various steps in the process of making the wool into the rolls from which the housewife spun the woolen thread. The thread, spun and dyed, was taken to the weaver, Graves, whose loom was in the top of the two-story mill. Mr. Edwards recalls the lead weights which hung to the cords of the loom. David Graves came, he thinks, from Richmond to Morgan County, and

was considered a fine weaver. His coverlets were usually marked with his initials, "D. I. G." One of the handsomest coverlets in Henry County bears in the corners the letters "E. S." Below that, "by D. I. G., " and the date 1839. This was given by David Hoover, pioneer settler of Richmond, as a wedding present to his daughter Esther, who married Henry Shroyer. The date on the coverlet is therefore the date of her marriage. The coverlet has the "goldfinch border"—in each square of the border, perched on twigs, are two small white or light colored birds, with dark wings, facing each other.

GABRIEL GILMORE

W. E. Crawford, of Union County, Indiana, writes of Gabriel Gilmore:

Reverend Archibald Craig came to this country from Scotland in 1820 and settled in South Carolina. With him came his daughter Janet and her husband, Gabriel Gilmore. In 1826 the Reverend Craig with Mr. Gilmore came to Mt. Carmel, where the former became pastor of the Presbyterian church there. Gabriel Gilmore had been a weaver in Scotland, as were also his three brothers, William, Joseph, and Thomas, who came to this country either with Gabriel or later. The four brothers bought a farm two miles west of Dunlapsville, Union County, Indiana, and built two dwelling houses and a two-story, hewed log loom house, where they set up their looms and patterns, said to have been brought from New Haven, Connecticut. Later, Joseph moved to Missouri, and Gabriel and Thomas moved to Decatur County, Indiana, about 1858. William moved to Oskaloosa, Iowa, taking the looms with him, but they were never used after reaching there.

ROBERT MILLER [MILTON?]

Robert Miller [Milton?], a coverlet weaver, came to Salem, Indiana, about 1857 or 1858 to work in the woolen mill of Campbell, Allen & Company. He had a loom built on the corner of Market and Mill streets on the property of Joseph Allen, one of the owners of the mill. He sent to England for his loom. He made a business of weaving coverlets in one piece, no seams. These were mostly blue and white. A beautiful coverlet of his weaving is owned by Mrs. Earl Adams, given to Earl Adams by his grandmother, Mrs. Lucinda Conner.

Robert Miller boarded with Mrs. Conner's mother, and not being able to pay his board, gave her two coverlets valued at that time at ten dollars each. Mrs. Conner says that Robert Miller was about five feet tall, very broad shouldered, and had a very dark complexion. He left Salem about the time of the Civil War and nothing is known of him after that time.

JAMES MCKINNEY

Franklin County in its pioneer days had a coverlet weaver known as "Uncle Jimmy" McKinney. He lived up the West Fork of Whitewater about three miles, in what in that early day was known as "the Carolina Settlement." He was a Scotchman and both he and his family were somewhat above the average in education and general intelligence. His daughter, Mary, known as Polly, married Graem Hanna, one of the most prominent young men of that period (1815). His sons, James and John T. McKinney, became prominent attorneys, the latter dying while judge, in the year 1837. His remains lie in an old cemetery in the north end of Brookville. There are none left of this name, but grandchildren of Mary McKinney are, a few of them, near the old settlement. The Graem homestead is still in the family name.

Mrs. S. S. Harrell, of Brookville, has in her possession two handsome double coverlets of this Scotch weaver's workmanship, but has reason to believe that there are few of them left in the country.

CHARLES ADOLPH

From Clarence H. Smith we have the following information:

Looking through the original files of the census enumeration taken in Henry County in 1860, and in Liberty Township, postoffice, Millville, which is about six miles east of Newcastle, I found the name Charles Adolph, aged 35, occupation "weaver." Place of birth, France. Value of real estate —; value of personal property, \$100. Other members of the household were Emerance (presumably the wife) aged 37, born in Wurtemburg, Ger., and children all born in Indiana. Catherine, aged 11 years; George, aged 9 years; Pheba, aged 8 years;

Mary, aged 4 years; Elizabeth, aged 4 years; Jacob, aged 2 years; and Nancy, aged one year. There is a coverlet in the county which has woven in the corner, "Charles Adolph, Henry County, Indiana, 1857."

JOHN WHISLER

John Whisler had a loom at Milton. He came to Milton in 1826 from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and lived on a farm south of Milton. He followed his vocation of weaving coverlets and seamless grain bags; about 1843 he moved to Milton where he continued his work until cotton advanced and such work was no longer profitable. Mrs. L. P. Zeller, of Milton, formerly Emma Wilson, a granddaughter of John Whisler, says that she can remember when he wove coverlets. When he stopped weaving coverlets, he turned his attention to weaving rag carpets and rugs. Mrs. Zeller has a part of a rag carpet he wove many years ago. He has one son, Sanford Whisler, the last of the family, now past eighty-six years old, living in Milton.

Mrs. Edgar R. Beeson, of Milton, Whisler's great-granddaughter, says that her grandfather wove into the two lower corners of his coverlets his name, John Wissler, Wayne county, and the date. At first, he spelled his name in the German fashion, but in 1840, he changed it to Whisler to conform to the usage of his Indiana relatives.

OTHER WEAVERS

Henry Adolf, of Hamilton County, who misspelt it "Hamil-don," in his trade-mark, is said to have been an employe of John Whisler of Milton, Indiana.

John Marr and John Snyder also are said to be employes of Whisler.

Peter Lorenz, Wayne County. A coverlet made by Henry Adolf and Peter Lorenz, of Wayne County, is owned by Edward Hatfield, of Brookville, Indiana.

William Hicks was a weaver in Madison County on Kilbuck Creek, in the fifties.

William Kerns was a weaver in Parke County, near Leatherwood Creek, where it crosses the Rockville-Montezuma road, about seventy-five years ago, according to George Branson, of Brazil, Indiana.

A coverlet in the Northern Indiana Historical Museum has woven in the lower corner, "South Bend, 1846." The weaver is unknown, but the wool was spun by Mrs. Peter Ballenger, according to a note attached to the coverlet.

Vogel, a German weaver of coverlets, unmarried, lived in a two-story building on South Washington Street, in Crawfordsville about 1846-47.

The name is given of a weaver, Ballentyne, date 1849. The coverlet is owned in Delphi, Indiana, but the origin of the weaver is unknown.

— Bissett, Franklin, Indiana.

John and Damus Huber, living near New Alsace in Dearborn County, Indiana, 1840-50, are names given by W. D. Robinson.

Joseph Nurre [Dearborn County, 1850?].

— Schrontz, Dearborn County.

Ritchie Thompson, Brownsville, 1834.

William Fairbrothers, of Henry County.

J. Craig, of Andersonville, Floyd County.

Samuel Stinger, of Carthage, Rush County.

John Striebig, 1834, Wayne County.

Henry Wilson, 1852, who lived near New Winchester, Hendricks County.

Accounts of the professional weavers, Thomas Cranston, George Simpson, and James Baird are included in the following sketch of Switzerland County weavers.

Weavers mentioned, but not included in headings on earlier pages, are: Matthew Young, in the sketches of William and James Craig on pages 414 and 415; George Adolph, on page 411; the Gilmore brothers, Joseph, William, and Thomas, on page 421; and Henry La Tourette, on page 408.

COVERLET WEAVING IN SWITZERLAND COUNTY

By

Mrs. A. V. Danner, Vevay

The art of Coverlet weaving was brought to Switzerland County, Indiana, by the Scotch and Irish immigrants as early as 1815. The oldest example of their art that the writer has had the pleasure of examining is the Cowan coverlet, rose and blue in color and the pattern of the "door and window" design. It was in 1815 that Donald Cowan and his bride, Jennie Ewing, left the "Auld Countree" and sailed seven long weary weeks in an old schooner across the seas. We hear that they were seasick and homesick, but they never faltered as the long miles by land, over mountain and down the mighty river, were slowly traveled, until they reached Craig Township, Switzerland County, Indiana, about six miles back from the river on Long Run Creek. There they gathered the limestone from the creek and hillside and built a limestone house. No attempt was made in these houses to dress the stone, which was laid up in a rough but artistic wall, often two feet thick, with large stone chimneys and fire places as large as a modern kitchenette, a fortress for defence and an advance in architecture over the log cabin. This house and many more of its time and style are now in a good state of preservation. Donald raised sheep and Jennie set up her loom. Together they went into the primeval forest and gathered the barks and herbs for her dyes, for she wove the Scotch tartan, flannels with graduated stripes, to clothe the family. The hickory bark, walnut bark, white ash and black oak, maple and red oak, yielded different color dyes and larkspur, bloodroot, poke root, burdock and the flowers from black-eyed-Susan, were dye-yielding herbs. So that in every sense the Cowan coverlet is a Switzerland County home product, made in 1820 and now owned by a granddaughter, Mrs. Emma Ramseyer, of Vevay.

Henry and Ann (Chambers) Andrews, from Ireland, came to Switzerland County in 1820 with their young widowed daugh-

ter, Mrs. Susan Betts. She, too, lived in a limestone house on the Fairview Pike, Jefferson Township. She delighted in weaving Irish linen sheets and plaid blankets, also coverlets in blue and white and Irish rose color. One of her coverlets is a "Whig rose" pattern in blue and white, another a honeycomb in blue and white with a rose frame, a very dainty pattern and the colors are still deep and clear, neither is there a mistake in these intricate patterns, woven by count of thread and the beat of a common loom. These coverlets are owned by her family. She later married Mr. Nash and a treasured bit of linen of her weaving was made into a sampler by her step-daughter, who embroidered the alphabet and numerals in cross-stitch with brown thread, and below, her name "Matilda Nash, 1838." This sampler and the "Whig rose" coverlet are owned by the writer. Mrs. Susan Nash died in 1876.

"Away down in Craig Township," eighty years ago, Naomi Bray was weaving a "lover's knot" coverlet in blue and white, verily a maiden's dream, for the next year she married Mr. Wiseman. This is the only coverlet she made and when asked why she did not weave another, she replied that she had too many housewife's cares and different things to distract her mind from count and beat of the pattern, for the weaver must keep her mind on the work incessantly until it is finished when weaving on a common loom. However, she did weave plaid flannels and many yards of jeans. Her daughter, who owns the coverlet, said, "I used to help my mother thread the loom, the chain was doubled and twisted on the big wheel, then bleached and spooled, put on the warping bars, taken off in loops and laid on, so many yards on the beam of the loom, unwound through the gears, the reeds and the temples to keep it straight, for it was a difficult task to keep the selvage even." This loom was later sold to a rag carpet weaver.

Mrs. Wiseman, who was an expert in the dyer's art, colored wool for several coverlets made by the professional weaver, Thomas Cranston. She set the "blue pot" with madder and flour. The indigo was sewed up in a flannel bag and put to

soak in a kettle of water ; then the indigo yeast was added, which had been carefully saved from year to year. It was thick and greenish in color when poured into the new dye. This mixture was kept warm day and night on the hearth of the old fire place for four or five days until it was "ripe." It was then brought to a boil and the wool dipped and aired, and dipped and aired, until it became that deep, dark, beautiful blue we see in these hand-dyed and hand-loomed coverlets.

She also colored wool in scarlet and crimson with madder. The scarlet and white Cranston coverlet in the honeysuckle and wreath pattern with a large dove in each corner and basket of roses in the border is as much a tribute to her dyer's art as to his craftsmanship in tapestry weaving. Mrs. Wiseman colored "clouded yarns" by wrapping the yarn tightly with cotton cord for an inch every eight or ten inches, dipping it all in the dye. When the wrappings were removed that space was white and when woven or knitted made a clouded or variegated effect.

The Scotch settlement in Pleasant Township, Switzerland County, developed the art of hand-woven fabrics that seems to be all their own in the history of the county. About thirty Scotch families immigrated here before 1825 and settled ten miles back from the river, without regard to county lines, in both Switzerland and Jefferson counties, among the braes and glens and dales that resembled their native home, brought with them their craft and thrift, and made a bit of Scotland for themselves. Their church, Caledonia, was built on the county line, the "kirk" in Switzerland, and the "kirkyard," where they buried their dead, in Jefferson County. When the Wither-spoon family came over, they brought their silver spoons and brass candlesticks. They floated down the Ohio River in a flatboat. They were weavers of Scotch tartan flannels, the mother weaving and the girls spinning. Miss Maggie said, "Eight cuts was a day's stint for us, or 120 threads, and sometimes we were through our stint by 3 o'clock on the afternoon."

About 1835 or 1840 a Scotch tapestry coverlet weaver named George Simpson arrived in the settlement. He and his wife

lived in a log cabin on the Witherspoon farm. He operated a Jacquard loom and wove for housewives of the neighborhood, who spun and dyed pounds of wool that each child might have his own coverlet. His first coverlet was made for Mrs. Uzzia Stow. After weaving the center he waited several weeks for the border pattern to arrive from England. This border was a trailing vine with small birds scattered along. Miss Witherspoon has a Simpson coverlet in blue and white, design of oak leaves, blocked off in twelve inch blocks by fancy columns, end border of basket of roses, side border a vine, and in each corner an eagle with spread wings. We have heard of several others of similar designs.

Before the Civil War, Mrs. Cockerill, of Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, engaged a man there to make eight tapestry coverlets, one for each of her children. When he had woven one and half of another, he died. She could not find a Jacquard weaver in Tennessee or Kentucky and hearing of Mr. Simpson, sent her yarn to Switzerland County. He wove the seven coverlets for her. Of late years, her son, Major Cockerill, wanted to buy the loom on which they were made. It was found stowed in dust and cobwebs of a crib, but the Major died before it was shipped to him and it is at present owned by Mr. Ed Lamson, of Craig Township, Switzerland County. Mr. Simpson died about 1855. He is referred to as Simpson, the weaver, father of Dr. Robert Simpson, a popular physician in the county, who was born in 1845 and practiced from 1870 to 1900.

A Scotch bachelor, Thomas Cranston, arrived about the time Mr. Simpson died. He brought his Jacquard loom and began weaving the tapestries. He had served a seven year apprenticeship in Scotland to learn his craft. He married Miss Ann Glenn, of Jefferson County, and bought a farm on Brushy Fork, where he built a limestone house in the garden where, as one of his Scotch friends told the writer, "he wove at odd times and wet spells." He had a book of patterns from which his patrons selected the one they liked. I have seen six of the Cranston

coverlets and heard of several more in the county, all blue and white except Mrs. Wiseman's scarlet and white. All of these coverlets were dyed by the county housewives. Some of the tapestry patterns are "moss border with snails," "moss and roses," Scotch thistle patterns, large medallion and small polka dots, with a small bird in a wreath of leaves in the corner of the borders. One conventional geometric pattern had no border. He delighted in baskets, roses, and borders of birds—eagles, larks, and blue buntings. In 1870 after modern machinery had supplanted the hand loom, Thomas Cranston with his family moved to Kansas, where he was elected to the state legislature several times.

Mr. Frances, a Scotch weaver, believed in advertising his craft by solemnly stating to each patron that he wove his clover blossoms so perfectly that the bees flew on them to suck up the honey. A blanket weaver amused his patrons by always speaking of making his tartans "cleek" instead of match.

James Baird, an Irishman, was a professional weaver, but I have not seen any of his work. It is the housewife's coverlet, of which there are many in the county, that has the strongest appeal to me. The sacrificing woman "who, seeking wool and flax, worked willingly with her hands," who dreamed and spun, and dreaming, wove a fabric unique in form and rare in color from homely products around her, "covering the household with tapestry," deserves great admiration. Alas, her skill and the pride of her art died with her! No one now in the county can thread the old loom, can give a receipt for the bark-herb dye, or can count the thread and beat of the "lover's knot" or the "Whig rose." We would think it were all tradition if it were not for the beautiful coverlets that in their perfect fabrics and the beauty of their fadeless colors testify to a forgotten art of the past.

INTERESTING OLD COVERLETS OF INDIANA

Many interesting bits of information concerning coverlets in Indiana have come to light during the search for the history

of old coverlet weavers. One of the oldest coverlets in the state was shown at Brazil during the Clay County centennial celebration. It was made in England in 1798 and brought to America by the grandmother of Dorsey Arvin, its present owner, first to Kentucky, and then to Daviess County, Indiana.

Another very old coverlet is the property of Mrs. Dan Carter, of Rockville, Indiana. It is in three colors and of an unusual pattern. When Mrs. Carter bought the coverlet, she had the owner make an affidavit as to the truth of his statement. Dr. James Corie stated that this coverlet was two hundred years old. The yarn was spun and woven and colored by Mrs. Johanna Verlam and bequeathed to her daughter, Mrs. Mary Comstock, who in 1814, gave it to her daughter, Mary Wanamaker (fifteen years of age) in exchange for splitting rails to enclose their cabin. Mary Wanamaker at her death in 1885, gave the coverlet to her good friend, Mrs. Mary A. Corie. On Mrs. Corie's death on April 8, 1921, it passed into the hands of her husband, Dr. James Corie, who sold it to Mrs. Carter. The Wanamakers, says Mrs. Carter, were settlers of Parke County.

A coverlet story which illustrates the high esteem in which coverlets were held and the desire of the parents to present each child with a coverlet is told of Harry M. and Rachel A. Clemons, of Decatur County, who had eleven coverlets made by William Craig, of Greensburg. Mr. Clemons sheared the sheep and spun the wool which was then turned over to the Craigs. Each year for ten years he had them weave a double coverlet, paying each time five dollars for the weaving. These passed into the possession of the Clemons' children. The dates of the covers are all in the forties.

An unusual coverlet shown at the Tippecanoe County centennial exhibition of relics has an intricate pattern showing a farmer plowing in his field, with birds flying overhead, and farm buildings scattered about. The figures are quite small and the pattern is repeated over the entire coverlet. It has no trade-mark.

A woman of North Vernon describes a coverlet which is said to have been woven for her grandmother by an unknown weaver near Richmond, Indiana, in 1855, as having a border design of hunter and hounds. A somewhat similar design forms the border of a coverlet in the possession Mrs. Walter Q. Gresham, of Indianapolis. The design is a hunting scene, with trees in the background, and in the foreground, a hunter with his gun, and a dog in pursuit of a fleeing deer. In the corner is a trade-mark, a small but neatly designed two-story building with an elaborate cupola. The date, 1848, is woven below.

Three child's coverlets, the only three known to exist, are owned in this state. One was woven in Ohio, and its description, by Mrs. J. D. Fogle, of Bourbon, Indiana, gives its size as three by four feet. The colors are dull green, dark blue, and white. The design is that sometimes known as "Young Man's Fancy" and the side borders are of birds and roses while the border across the foot is of grapes and leaves. In the trademark square is the weaver's name, "Vernon township, Crawford county, Ohio. J. C. Cole, 1861." The second, in the possession of Mrs. A. L. Flanningham, of Thorntown, Indiana, is thirty-six by thirty-two inches in size, with a four-inch fringe on two sides and one end. The colors are blue, green, and two shades of red. The name of the weaver is unknown. The third, woven by John Whisler, was shown at a coverlet exhibit at Milton, Indiana, in 1928. It was the duplicate in pattern of a large coverlet by the same weaver, and was evidently ordered with the idea of having the covering for the large bed and the child's bed match.

A story which shows a woman's regard for a coverlet which has been a family possession for many years is told by Mrs. Ann Mayer, of Indianapolis, concerning a beautiful blue and white coverlet in a pattern of large five-pointed stars, alternating with elaborate curved designs, and with four borders. The trade-mark is a large single flower, without date or name, and the weaver is unknown. Mrs. Mayer states:

I was only twelve when my parents died, and our home was broken up and our goods put up at auction. Of course it was all hard enough, but the last straw, it seemed to me, was the loss of this coverlet. Although so young, I bid it in, with the understanding that the amount bid should be deducted from my share of the estate. I wish I could give you the exact age of the coverlet. I am eighty-one [this letter was written in 1926] and I know it has covered four generations, and as the first recollection I have of it was from a sister of my grandmother, I think I am safe in saying five generations, anyway.

A passage from a will of Dubois County, dated April 29, 1905, disposing of over \$50,000, shows the high regard in which hand-woven coverlets are held in some families. In this will Mrs. Margaret Sherritt gave to John H. Sherritt "a coverlet made by Margaret Gibson Brown more than a hundred years ago."

It is not possible, within the limits of this pamphlet, to list the names of "single" coverlet weavers, since such coverlets were woven in many households, and a number of these names have been preserved. The collector of coverlets should remember that, with the exception of Sarah LaTourette, who worked with her father, no woman is known to have mastered the intricacies of the loom for "double" coverlet weaving. While the tradition has come down in many families that the coverlets were woven by the grandmother or great-grandmother, it will be found that in the case of the "double" coverlet, her work was confined to the preparation of the materials, which were then taken to the professional weaver.

The Civil War, improved machinery, and aniline dyes brought an end to the work of the hand weaver. For a time some coverlets were made by machinery in factories after the old patterns. These are easily distinguished from the others by the coloring and the style of weaving. They have little of the beauty of the old covers with their soft rich dyes and beautiful weaving.

The period of the hand-woven coverlet may be said to lie between the Colonial days and the Civil War; in Indiana, from the coming of the first settlers into this territory until Civil War days.

Much material remains to be collected regarding this branch of art, and this research should be a part of the work of the county historical societies. As has already been done in Washington County, the coverlets in the county should be listed and their history, so far as possible, recorded. Those that were the work of the housewife should be listed separately from those that were the work of the professional weaver. In old sheds and outhouses, old looms are falling into decay; every county historical society should preserve one of these that the children may learn from it something of the laborious art of weaving. The names of the weavers of "single" coverlets, in addition to those of the professional weavers should be collected. Trade-marks should be studied, as well as the weaving patterns, many of which seem to be peculiar to some of our weavers.

Enthusiasts over handcraft in other states have for some years been making collections of hand-woven coverlets. Our state has a few collectors whose collections show some notable examples of the weavers both of this state and others. Those who would undertake this branch of collecting should be reminded that even a fragment is desirable, since it shows pattern and dyes, and that both "single" and "double" coverlets should be included in the collection. A collection for a future state museum which would include an example of the work of each of our professional weavers as well as of coverlets woven at home would form an illuminating page of early Indiana history. Perhaps half the charm of coverlet study comes from the fact that in it one reads so much of the story of the Indiana pioneer.

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